

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Whereas, For more than fifty years, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has played a pivotal role in promoting stability and peace in Europe. This highly successful venture is predicated on the commitment of its member nations to ideals that closely parallel the precepts of democracy, internationally recognized human rights, and civilian control of the military that are fundamental to the United States; and

Whereas, Since its establishment, NATO has gradually expanded its membership to reflect the changing face of Europe. Countries that have joined this alliance have shared the same commitment to the long-term strength and stability of the region that is vital to our nation and the world. The most recent additions have in common the peaceful transition to a free-market economy after long years under the yoke of Communism; and

Whereas, The Baltic nations of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania have clearly demonstrated the principles of NATO. These three countries, each with strong dedication to peace and exemplary records of resisting oppression, have a great deal to contribute to the alliance. Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania have set examples of the ideals of freedom through their institutions and cultures. The addition of these nations to NATO will only make more secure the bonds of peace and democracy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate (the house of representatives concurring), That we memorialize the President and the Congress of the United States to support the addition of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Office of the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM-255. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Virginia relative to women in Afghanistan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 603

Whereas, The Taliban regime has not recognized international human rights treaties agreed to by previous governments and the international community, citing irrelevance to its culture and Islamic law; and

Whereas, Under Taliban rule, Afghan women have been subjected to a brutal system of gender apartheid and extreme repression, including being banned from schools, prohibited from working, forbidden from leaving their homes and being forced to wear head-to-toe burka shrouds; and

Whereas, Afghan women have been subjected to harsh punishments in the form of public beatings in the name of "religion and culture" upon violation of Taliban decrees; and

Whereas, These decrees have caused a virtual collapse of the educational system, a complete disregard of human and civil rights and have had a disastrous impact on health care systems in Afghanistan; and

Whereas, These decrees represent a striking departure from past religious and cultural practices in Afghanistan; and

Whereas, The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979; and

Whereas, The United States became a party to CEDAW but never ratified the convention; and

Whereas, There have been 16 ratifications and accessions of CEDAW including Iraq,

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Great Britain and Canada, with the most recent country, Mauritania, ratifying CEDAW on May 10, 2001; and

Whereas, Notable exceptions of countries not yet ratifying CEDAW besides the United States include Iran and Afghanistan; and

Whereas, The United States has joined with the United Nations in attempting to include women in all aspects of the humanitarian, reconstruction and redevelopment efforts in Afghanistan as well as in the reestablishment of a constitutional democracy in Afghanistan; and

Whereas, After years of being subjected and brutally repressed by the Taliban regime, Afghan women should enjoy full and equal participation in every level of Afghan society without discrimination: Therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That the Senate hereby urges the government of the United States ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and be it further

Resolved, That the senate hereby urges the government of the United States accelerate and strengthen efforts to ensure that Afghan women have a full and equal role in every aspect of the reconstruction process and the reestablishment of a constitutional democracy in post-Taliban Afghanistan in which women have full and equal civil and human rights and social justice; and be it further

Resolved, That the Clerk of the Senate is hereby directed to forward a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and the President of the United States Senate.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JEFFORDS, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1917: A bill to provide for highway infrastructure investment at the guaranteed funding level contained in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. (Rept. No. 107-163).

By Mr. JEFFORDS, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, without amendment and an amendment to the title:

S. 2024: A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to authorize use of electric personal assistive mobility device on trails and pedestrian walkways constructed or maintained with Federal-aid highway funds. (Rept. No. 107-164).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. CORZINE (for himself, Mr. TORRICELLI, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 2628. A bill to amend part A of title IV of the Social Security Act to require a State to promote financial education under the temporary assistance to needy families program and to allow financial education to count as a work activity under that program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DASCHLE (for Mr. TORRICELLI):

S. 2629. A bill to provide for an agency assessment, independent review, and Inspector General report on privacy and data protection policies of Federal agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. INOUE:

S. 2630. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve benefits for Filipino veterans of World War II and surviving spouses of such veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 198

At the request of Mr. CRAIG, the names of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL) were added as cosponsors of S. 198, a bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to provide assistance through States to eligible weed management entities to control or eradicate harmful, nonnative weeds on public and private land.

S. 1114

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. HOLLINGS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1114, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the amount of educational benefits for veterans under the Montgomery GI Bill.

S. 1785

At the request of Mr. CLELAND, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1785, a bill to urge the President to establish the White House Commission on National Military Appreciation Month, and for other purposes.

S. 2025

At the request of Mr. HUTCHINSON, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2025, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the rate of special pension for recipients of the Medal of Honor and to make that special pension effective from the date of the act for which the recipient is awarded the Medal of Honor and to amend title 18, United States Code, to increase the criminal penalties associated with misuse or fraud relating to the Medal of Honor.

S. 2053

At the request of Mr. FRIST, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2053, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve immunization rates by increasing the distribution of vaccines and improving and clarifying the vaccine injury compensation program, and for other purposes.

S. 2070

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2070, a bill to amend part A of title IV to exclude child care from the determination of the 5-year limit on assistance under the temporary assistance to needy families program, and for other purposes.

S. 2210

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota

(Mr. WELLSTONE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2210, a bill to amend the International Financial Institutions Act to provide for modification of the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

S. 2215

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2215, a bill to halt Syrian support for terrorism, end its occupation of Lebanon, stop its development of weapons of mass destruction, cease its illegal importation of Iraqi oil, and by so doing hold Syria accountable for its role in the Middle East, and for other purposes.

S. 2239

At the request of Mr. SARBANES, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. MILLER) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2239, a bill to amend the National Housing Act to simplify the downpayment requirements for FHA mortgage insurance for single family homebuyers.

S. 2246

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2246, a bill to improve access to printed instructional materials used by blind or other persons with print disabilities in elementary and secondary schools, and for other purposes.

S. 2250

At the request of Mr. CORZINE, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2250, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to reduce the age for receipt of military retired pay for nonregular service from 60 to 55.

S. 2428

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2428, a bill to amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act.

S. 2471

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2471, a bill to provide for the independent investigation of Federal wildland firefighter fatalities.

S. 2482

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2482, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to grant to Deschutes and Crook Counties in the State of Oregon a right-of-way to West Butte Road.

S. 2490

At the request of Mr. TORRICELLI, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 2490, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure the quality of, and access to, skilled nursing facility services under the medicare program.

S. 2570

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CLELAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2570, a bill to temporarily increase the Federal medical assistance percentage for the medicaid program, and for other purposes.

S. 2577

At the request of Mr. FITZGERALD, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2577, a bill to repeal the sunset of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 with respect to the exclusion from Federal income tax for restitution received by victims of the Nazi Regime.

S. 2591

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. JEFFORDS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2591, a bill to reauthorize the Mammography Quality Standards Act, and for other purposes.

S. 2611

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2611, a bill to reauthorize the Museum and Library Services Act, and for other purposes.

S. 2626

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. CHAFEE) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) were added as cosponsors of S. 2626, a bill to protect the public health by providing the Food and Drug Administration with certain authority to regulate tobacco products.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CORZINE (for himself, Mr. TORRICELLI, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 2628. A bill to amend part A of title IV of the Social Security Act to require a State to promote financial education under the temporary assistance to needy families program and to allow financial education to count as a work activity under that program; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleagues Senators TORRICELLI and KENNEDY to introduce the Financial Literacy for Self-Sufficiency Act.

Our bill would require states to promote financial education through their TANF, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, programs. Financial education, education that promotes an understanding of consumer, and personal finance concepts, is extremely important for all families, and is especially important for low-income families who are moving from welfare to work.

While TANF focuses on moving families off cash assistance and into work, it fails to provide recipients with the tools they need to maximize their earnings

and manage their expenses in order to achieve financial stability once they are employed. If we truly expect to move these families to achieve financial independence, we must give them the tools they will need to make that transition.

One of these tools is a bank account. Millions of low-income families remain outside of the formal banking system, with many of them spending too much of their hard-earned dollars at costly check cashing operations. In fact, more than eight million families earning under \$25,000 a year lack a checking or savings account. A study conducted by the United States Department of the Treasury in 2000 found that a worker earning \$12,000 a year would pay approximately \$250 a year just to cash their payroll checks at such an outlet. And, nearly 16 percent of the checks cashed at check cashing outlets are government benefits checks, including welfare benefit checks.

In addition to expanding the number of banks that do business in low-income communities, educating low-income unbanked families about the benefits of formal checking and savings accounts can significantly improve access to financial services.

But, financial education isn't just about bank accounts and savings. It is also about protecting low-income families from predatory lending and devastating credit arrangements. Financial education that addresses abusive lending practices can help prevent unaffordable loan payments, equity stripping, and foreclosure. I strongly support legislative efforts to end predatory lending practices in our country, but until we do, ensuring that consumers are aware of unfair and abusive loan terms is a measure that will provide them some protection from these tactics.

Finally, families leaving welfare for work face many challenges, including securing child care and transportation. One challenge that often is not mentioned, however, is the challenge of transitioning from a benefits-based income to a wage income. Financial literacy programs that educate families transitioning from welfare to work about taxes and tax benefits that they may be eligible for, such as the Department Care Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit, will ensure that they have access to these important work benefits.

The Financial Literacy for Self-Sufficiency Act will allow states to use their TANF funds to collaborate with community-based organizations, banks, and community colleges to create financial education programs for low-income families receiving welfare and for those transitioning from welfare to work. As Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has noted, "Educational and training programs may be the most critical service offered by community-based organizations to enhance the ability of lower-income households to accumulate assets."